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NEWS

GM cassava has 'super size' roots

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Scientists who have genetically modified cassava plants to produce dramatically bigger roots say their research could help alleviate hunger in developing countries.

The starchy roots of cassava are a staple food for about 600 million people in parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Lead researcher Richard Sayre of Ohio State University in the United States told SciDev.Net that he hopes there will be interest in releasing the plants to Africa free of charge.

The results were published online in *Plant Biotechnology Journal* on 5 May.

Sayre's team inserted a bacterial gene that affects starch production into the cassava's DNA. The modified plants' roots were more numerous and up to 2.6 times bigger than in normal plants.

The modified plants also had more leaves, which are eaten in Africa as a source of protein, minerals and vitamins.

[Link to abstract of paper in *Plant Biotechnology Journal*](#)

Reference: *Plant Biotechnology Journal* doi:10.1111/j.1467-7652.2006.00195.x (2006)



Millions of people rely on cassava as a staple crop. Wikipedia / David Monniaux

<http://www.scidev.net/en/news/gm-cassava-has-super-size-roots.html>
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